

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-11 H-02 INR-10 INT-05
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, EAGR, PK
SUBJ: ECONOMIC BRIEFING FOR POLITICAL LEADERS

1. GENERAL ZIA MET FOR THE SECOND TIME ON MARCH 4 TO BRIEF
POLITICAL LEADERS ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY. PRINCIPAL
BRIEFERS THIS TIME WERE PETROLEUM AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SECRETARY, SHAHZAD SADIQ AND ADVISER ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE,
DR. AMIR MOHAMMED KHAN.

2. SADIQ REVIEWED THE STATUS OF OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION
AND SAID THAT THE STATE OWNED OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION (OGDC) WOULD BE ABLE TO BEGIN DRILLING 17 WELLS
THIS YEAR AND COMPLETE NINE. SADIQ POINTED TO THE INCREASING
INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES IN PAKISTAN AS CONFIRM-
ATION THAT PAKISTAN HAD LARGE UNTAPPED QUANTITIES OF OIL AND
GAS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THREE PREVIOUSLY ABANDONED SITES
AT KARAK, ADHI AND OFFSHORE THATTA WOULD BE REOPENED
WITH THE GOP RECEIVING BETWEEN 40-48 PERCENT OF ANY OIL
DISCOVERED THERE WITH THE JOINT VENTURE PARTNER RECEIVING
THE REST.

3. DURING THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION GENERAL ZIA
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REAFFIRMED AN EARLIER DIRECTIVE TO LAY A GAS PIPELINE
FROM PIRKOH TO QUETTA. HE SAID A MEMORANDUM OF INTEREST
HAD BEEN SIGNED WITH AN UNIDENTIFIED AMERICAN FIRM FOR
THE PROJECT. ALTHOUGH NO COMMITMENTS WERE MADE, THE
AMERICAN FIRM REPORTEDLY CAME UP WITH AN ESTIMATE OF
DOL\$45 MILLION FOR THE JOB.

4. DR. AMIR MOHAMMED KHAN REVIEWED THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SCENE AND ESTIMATED THIS YEAR'S WHEAT CROP AT ABOUT 9 MILLION TONS. HE SAID COUNTING RICE EXPORTS, PAKISTAN WAS SELF SUFFICIENT IN FOOD GRAIN; HOWEVER, COMPARED TO AN ESTIMATED 100 MILLION TON CAPACITY, PAKISTAN WAS PRODUCING ONLY 14 TO 15 MILLION TONS OF FOODGRAINS.

5. AMIR MOHAMMED WENT ON TO ENUMERATE THE STEPS BEING TAKEN TO IMPROVE DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS TO FARMERS SUCH AS FERTILIZER IMPORTS, SEED PROGRAM, INCREASED CROP PRODUCTION MEASURES AND STUDIES OF SUITABLE COOPERATIVE MODELS FOR PAKISTAN.

6. TURNING TO THE FOOD SITUATION, AMIR MOHAMMED SAID THAT ALTHOUGH MARCH WAS TRADITIONALLY A SHORT SUPPLY MONTH, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFICIENT WHEAT STOCKS TO MEET DEMAND AND IMPORTS WOULD ENSURE A GOOD SUPPLY OF WHEAT THROUGH MAY. REFERRING TO RECENT WIDESPREAD STATEMENTS BEING MADE ABOUT A SHORTAGE OF ATTA, HE PROFESSED TO NOT BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE BASIS FOR SUCH REPORTS AND THE ASSOCIATED HIGH PRICES. HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE SMUGGLING COULD ACCOUNT FOR SUCH SHORTAGES.

IN RESPONSE TO THE POLITICAL LEADERS CONCERN THAT
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AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE PART OF THE NEW RURAL UPLIFT STRATEGY, GENERAL ZIA ORDERED THAT HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE BE ORGANIZED TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

8. THE POLITICAL LEADERS EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE BRIEFING BUT, OTHER THAN THE GAS PIPELINE AND THE AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT LINK OFFERED NO SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS.
HUMMEL

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